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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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It’s been one of those weeks - uneventful. No, nothing to do with news or anything that might appear in this issue; just in general. It’s been a long week. The weather has been on the chilly side, but otherwise typical. No earth-shattering news this week which might allow me to get up on a soapbox and have at it. How boring! I can’t even complain about any new problems with the PC; now that’s bad! Oh well, things can’t be exciting every week.

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. I know that I promised a while back that I wouldn’t crowd this column with talk about my PC, but I’ve simply got to blow off some steam.

It seems that the most recent incarnation of Windows98 likes to periodically destroy several things that I’ve got set up on the Pentium II laptop. At least once a week I find that I need to reinstall either, partially or fully, at least two programs.

There’s only one that I really miss, and that’s my DVD movie player. The picture quality of a DVD movie on my laptop is at least twice the quality of my one year old television, and the added convenience of being able to move the computer to wherever I happen to be is just icing on the cake. Of course, a Pentium II laptop is an awfully expensive portable TV, but there aren’t too many portable televisions that you can do your taxes on either.

At any rate, I’m getting tired of having to reinstall programs just because something isn’t quite kosher with either Windows98 (which, if truth be told, isn’t the issue in this case) or programs that were written before Win98 was available. I’m also not keen all of these ’push’ technology innovations. You know, the ones where someone else decides what news pops up on your screen. But that’s just me. I prefer to be the one to decide what’s important to me instead of letting someone else do it. That’s another one of our problems today. We’re all too ready to allow someone else to clear the way for us, to "lay the groundwork" so to speak. Well, I’ve got news for you, folks; most of the time it’s that groundwork that’s important, not the end result. Remember when your parents or your teacher or your minister or whoever told you

that the ends don’t justify the means? Well it may sound trite or simplistic but it’s true.

Being a big Harry Chapin fan, I tend to relate this thought to one song in particular. The song is GREYHOUND. The last line of the song is "That’s a thought for keeping if I could. It’s got to be the going, not the getting there that’s good". Of course, there are plenty of other Chapin songs that are stuck in my head, and I doubt that I’ll ever forget the lyrics to most of them, but that one in particular is one of my favorites. It’s not really what I’d call a fantastic song, but that one singular thought, that fact of life that all of us know instinctively but that so often gets left by the wayside as we make our way through the world that strikes me so strongly.

I just wonder if I’d ever have heard that song if I’d only listened to "top ten" stations. Kind of puts a new light on that "push" technology doesn’t it?

Well, let’s get on with all the news that is news throughout the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Peter Kienle asks for advice about hard disk drivers:

I have a Mega STe 4. An old 44MB Syquest hooked up to it. Works fine but I still use the Hard Disk Drivers that came with my old Supra Drive Supra HD Utilities. During a recent HD problem I thought it might be good to find a replacement for the Supra Driver. I only have two floppies with it and they are old and can’t be copied...

My Syquest came with ICD software (5.4) but it refuses to talk to anything else but an ICD host adapter. The Syquest has one but of course not the Mega Ste.

Anyway, my question is: Is there any HD driver software someone can recommend (preferably free or very inexpensive)? I have long upgraded to two PowerMacs but still use some of the ST software and would like to keep my ST setup running smoothly. Any ideas?

The author of HDDriver, Dr. Uwe Seimet, tells Peter:

You might want to have a look at HDDRIVER:

http://home.nikocity.de/nogfradelt/atari_english.html

Roger Cain adds:

Why not use CBHD? This is freeware. A modern, fast driver. v5.02 is the latest release. If you want english RSC and docs. have a look on Derryck C’s site (http://www.cix.co.uk/~derryck).

Paul Matthews asks about the latest version of a high-end document processor:

What’s new in version 5 of Papyrus? I have used version 3.58 from Hisoft in the past, are there many improvements? Any information would

be appreciated.

John Whalley tells Paul:

There were some changes from 3.58 to 3.62 (?) which I can’t remember off hand, apart from the introduction of a bug which stopped it working under MultiTOS due to memory problems. This was removed again by the time 4 came out!

>>From the update manuals:

New in 4:

* Internal code rewritten to bring about major performance improvements (If I recall correctly, they re-wrote it in C, previous versions developed in GFA)

* Redesigned 3D user interface

* Colour picture support using EFMS picture loaders (as used with TruePaint/TrueImage)

* Colour print facilities with dither routines

* Keyboard shortcut-based text macros

* Multiple page previews

* Support for 16-bit character sets

New in 5:

* Paragraph numbering

* Arbitrary object angles (including text)

* Text object lines with attributes

* Alternate cursor shapes

* Horizontal and vertical guide lines (a la DTP)

* Context-sensitive pop-ups

* Enhanced mail merging

* Create document (speeds up creation of mail merge, TOC and index)

* Open copy function

* Enhanced RTF import/export

* Fill and line attributes for picture objects

* New dictionary

* Open existing document as a template

* Line breaks in addition to paragraph breaks

? Improved searching; now includes tables and anchored objects

John Logan adds that it:

Starts up quicker and some bugs ironed out but still some problems with the fancier printing options. The English Papyrus 7 is said to be due out RSN.

Incidentally did you know that you can tailor the keyboard shortcuts to suit using a file editor on the RSC file? Experiment on a copy only!

Dwayne O'Dwyer asks about installing a time clock in his ST:

A few years ago when I had my first ST, I installed a Real Time Clock module (From Dallas Semiconductors) inside my ST. Now that I have got another ST, I want to do the same. The program was called AREAL or something similar, and it came as a auto-load program which automatically retrieved the time and date from the module and set the ST's time. It also had an accessory which set the time initially. Does anyone know where I can get the program from, AND the installation instructions??? I have managed to get an old version of the program, but it hasn't got the installation instructions for the module with it. The files I have are called ar20boot.arc and ar20set.arc. Can someone out there help me, please!

Derryck Croker tells Dwayne:

I tried installing one of those modules (a DS1216) in my STFM a long while back, but I couldn't get it to start running at all!

I've recently had occasion to look at Dallas Semiconductors' web site, it looks like the DS1216 isn't available any more, so I'm wondering if there is a Y2K problem with it.

James Pinson asks for help with his hard drive:

Could some one help me solve a hard drive mess I got myself into? I stupidly deleted CONTROL.ACC from the AUTO folder, and when I next rebooted, the computer started to boot the C drive then threw bombs across the screen.

I knew immediately what I had done, but I can't seem to find any way to copy the file back onto the hard drive since the hard drive won't boot but it must be turned on before loading a boot disk into drive A or Drive C won't be recognized. See the circular problem here?

If I merely try to reset or switch the computer off and on, the Desktop comes up minus a recognition of Drive C. Not only that, it won't even read Drive A or B if Drive C is on but it can't read it. I can switch the hard drive off, reboot, and then the computer will read Drive A or B, but of course it then can't copy CONTROL.ACC to the hard drive.

So is my hard drive now just a doorstop or what?

My good friend Sheldon Winick tells James:

Deleting CONTROL.ACC should not affect your hard drive's boot operation. If the drive itself isn't damaged, you should be able to manually get back into it by running your boot software from floppy

(AHDI.PRG if you're using Atari's hard drive software). Then create a new Drive C icon on your desktop and reinstall the autoboot software -- use HDX.PRG if you're using Atari's software). Most likely, you have a corrupted boot file on your hard drive.

If you have a corrupt file on the hard drive that is interfering with proper booting from drive A, boot the system with the hard drive OFF, the turn on the hard drive and run AHDI after the drive comes up to speed.

Also check for bad sectors on the hard drive with a diagnostic program, once you're back into it. Good luck.

Chris Swinson asks for help finding an mp3 player:

I know there was a post before, but I cannot find any MP3 players at all. Can anyone help?

Steve tells Chris:

I heard that a dsp player for the Falcon was being written. Hopefully, one for the TT will be released as well.

John Garone tells Chris and Steve:

Try http://aniplay.atari.org for MP3 player. It also shows and plays a bunch of other pic and sound files. Let us know how it works for you.

Maury Markowitz asks for help locating a Star Trek game:

Way back when I remember playing a commercial version of the classic Star Trek game. In this version they had added a lot of detail, and instead of just going around blasting away you could also tractor in the ships and return them to starbases for extra points.

I also remember that in some modes it displayed a 2D side view of the ship that showed things like damage. It also tracked morale, and at suitably low values you could have a mutiny.

Does anyone remember anything about this game - like its title? I can't remember much.

Matthias Jaap tells Maury:

As far as I know, there was only one commercial Star Trek for the Atari. It featured digi graphics and sound and was Atari exclusive for about 1 1/2 year.

I don't remember the exact name but I guess it was "Star Trek: The Game".

Steve Stupple tells Maury:

It was called 'Star Trek - The Rebel Universe' and came with a sew-on patch. The game was an adventure type, & IIRC had 4 missions or variation on it.

There was a PD/Shareware game based on the, clear sector theme called 'Star Trek 25th Anniversary edition' that used graphics.

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Space Invaders For PSX/PC!
'Quake II'! Songbird News!
Final Fantasy Anthology!
Iron Soldier 3!! And much more!

->From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!

Very brief comments this week. I've been following the discussions on the Jaguar Interactive II web site. One discussion caught my eye regarding the scheduled pricing for the pending Jaguar titles from Songbird. The price is set for $69.95 for each of the upcoming four games. There have been a number of messages giving Songbird's Carl Forhan a difficult time because these people feel they're being taken advantage of and the price is too high. To them, I say, live with it! The Jaguar market is minuscule. Songbird cannot help reduce the costs by having large production runs to make up the difference in volume. There's little profit, if any, to be made by Songbird. Songbird is doing all of the work; and that work is likely not being considered in the final price of the games. Price too high? Don't buy the games! It's that simple. The man deserves to make some profit; and, at the least, break even.

Until next time...

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

'Final Fantasy' Anthology Ships for the Playstation

Collector's Package of Two Classic Titles from
Award-Winning FINAL FANTASY Series Hits U.S. Stores

Square Electronic Arts Tuesday announced the release of FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY for the PlayStation game console.

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY bundles FINAL FANTASY V and FINAL FANTASY VI, marking the first time the former is available in the U.S., and the first

time both games have been released on the PlayStation.

Both titles in this collector’s edition are classics from the FINAL FANTASY series, a product line that is heralded by the industry as the benchmark for all role playing games (RPGs). To date, the popular franchise has sold over 25 million units worldwide, making the series one of the top-selling video game franchises in the history of the interactive entertainment industry.

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY features the epic storylines, memorable characters, and intuitive controls that have come to be associated with the FINAL FANTASY franchise. In addition, both games in FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY contain all new computer-generated cinema sequences unique to this collection. Featured at the beginning and end of each game, the new movie sequences give FINAL FANTASY fans the chance to see old characters recreated with the unprecedented realism and dazzling cinematics possible with the latest in full motion video technology.

With over 30 hours of gameplay, the individual storylines are engaging to both the longtime RPG fan and the casual gamer alike. In FINAL FANTASY V, four travelers -- a pirate, an old soldier, an adventure hunter and a young girl -- embark on a quest to save the world from eminent destruction. Their only hope is to recover the Four Element Crystals that can combat the destructive force known as ‘‘the Nothingness."

In FINAL FANTASY VI, the fate of the world is threatened once again, this time by an evil empire that has enslaved the world with a deadly force known as ‘‘magic." As the game unfolds, a group of heroes unite to stop the empire. FINAL FANTASY VI was the first in the series to feature several FINAL FANTASY mainstays such as summoning magic spells and customizable character abilities.

An additional bonus, gamers of all ages will be enthralled with the addition of a music CD containing favorite scores from both titles, making this rendition compilation a dream collector’s item for all video game fans.

FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY is priced at US $40.00. The game carries an ESRB ‘‘T" rating (Teen).

Army of Aliens Invades Earth with Activision’s Update Of Classic Arcade Hit Space Invaders

Attention gamers! Prepare to attack, counter attack and save the Earth from alien invasion when Activision releases an all-new version of the legendary arcade classic Space Invaders for the PC and PlayStation game console the week of October 4, 1999. Space Invaders combines 3D graphics, explosive new weapons, expansive new worlds and a new generation of alien invaders to create what promises to be one of this year’s hottest games. Space Invaders will be available at more than 15,000 retail outlets throughout the United States and Canada and carries a suggested retail price of $39.95.

Xenophobia reigns supreme as Space Invaders pits gamers against wave after wave of 13 different outer space adversaries and 10 unrelenting alien ‘‘bosses" bent on conquering the universe. With over 100 spectacular 3D levels filled with weapons and power-ups, Space Invaders will challenge even the most seasoned inter-galactic warrior. Armed with infrared laser

beams, swarm-missiles, and neutron blasts gamers can turn the enemy into alien dust faster than ever before -- the all-new cooperative gameplay mode even allows two friends to join forces in a campaign to save the galaxy.

‘‘Asteroids set a benchmark in updating classic games and we have expanded on this standard in Space Invaders," stated Mitch Lasky, executive vice president, Activision Studios. ‘‘Space Invaders will introduce new gaming elements -- such as boss levels -- while still providing gamers with the addictive missile launching game play of the original arcade franchise."

Developed by Z-Axis, Space Invaders offers game fans the best of both worlds -- out of this world 70’s sensibilities and 90’s attitude. As an added bonus, avid fans of the classic Space Invaders can search out a version of the original game hidden amongst the new alien worlds.

Originally introduced by Taito Corporation in 1978, Space Invaders is one of the most popular arcade games ever made. In 1980, the game was licensed by Atari for the 2600 game system and was the first arcade game ever adapted for Atari’s home system. The Space Invaders franchise has flourished for more than 20 years and according to Taito, the game has generated more than $500 million in revenues over multiple platforms including coin-op, the Atari 2600 and the Nintendo Game Boy.

Earth Launches Its Final Assault With QUAKE II on the Playstation

For the first time ever, PlayStation game console owners will be able to experience the visceral thrill of QUAKE II when the blockbuster PC hit rocks onto the PlayStation game console the week of October 4, 1999.

Featuring mission-based levels, QUAKE II for the PlayStation game console delivers non-stop action as players attempt to annihilate alien aggressors and save the universe from mass destruction. Developed by Hammerhead, Ltd, executive produced by id Software, Inc. and distributed by Activision, Inc., QUAKE II for the PlayStation game console will be available in more than 15,000 retail outlets throughout the United States and Canada for the suggested retail price of $39.99.

‘‘QUAKE II for the PlayStation delivers frenetic, in your face action," said Todd Hollenshead, CEO, id Software. ‘‘With new mind-altering levels and brain numbing puzzles to challenge gamers of all levels -- from novice to the most experienced -- QUAKE II rocks!"

In QUAKE II, the future of humanity is at stake as earth launches its final assault against alien aggressors. As soldiers in an elite strike force, players must infiltrate the alien planet and fight their way through heavily fortified military installations. Gamers must dodge bullet spray and crawl through narrow shafts evading a continual barrage of gunfire as they annihilate their enemies in 19 slaughter strewn levels. Players must lower the city’s defenses and destroy the alien war machine in order to save the Earth from complete obliteration.

QUAKE II features a battalion of more than 13 flesh-hungry monsters that maneuver themselves into strategic attack locations and relentlessly hunt players down. The twitchy, dog-like Parasite sucks the life out of hapless victims, while the Beserker uses melee attacks to fell unsuspecting prey. Accelerating the butchery are the Arachnid, a new enemy whose deadly dual rail guns ruthlessly target its next victim, and the Tank, whose three

methods of attack -- machine gun, blaster and rocket volley -- effortlessly destroy all in its path.

‘‘PlayStation gamers can now experience the mayhem and destruction of QUAKE II and the awesome phenomenon of the QUAKE franchise," stated Mitch Lasky, executive vice president, Activision Studios. ‘‘The PlayStation version offers brand new levels as players become well-oiled machines in single player mode or in two- or four-player quad screen using the multi-tap for PlayStation accessory."

As players annihilate evil enemies, they must beware -- if the enemy is not destroyed, the Medic can raise them from the dead to rejoin the battalion. Human soldiers who fall victim to the alien race are processed into cyborgs and doomed to join the legions of alien warriors. To complete their mission, players must maneuver through intense environmental hazards such as molten lava, and toxic slime.

Armed with hard-core weaponry, players crawl through shafts and battle through dimly lit fortresses as they perform complex missions to obliterate the alien dregs of the universe.

QUAKE II features superior animation and killer effects allowing players to control smooth 3D models as they shatter windows, battle their enemies underwater and fight their way through dramatically lit environments. The game offers DUAL SHOCK(TM) analog controller and mouse for PlayStation support.

QUAKE II features wicked multi-player capabilities allowing two to four players to compete head-to-head. Gamers can play against up to three of their friends in Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch or Versus. Each game has its own unique rules, scoring, and method for winning. Any of the multi-player games can be played with two to four players in any of the 12 specially designed multi-player arenas.

Additionally, Quake II has been rated ‘‘M" (mature; 17 and over) by the ESRB.

THQ’s ‘‘Destruction Derby 64’’ Slams Into Retail

THQ Inc. last Friday announced the release of ‘‘Destruction Derby 64," the first Nintendo 64 installment of the popular PlayStation franchise famous for merging high-speed stock car racing with demolition derby pandemonium.

Developed by Looking Glass Studios and licensed from Psygnosis, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc., ‘‘Destruction Derby 64" delivers a completely chaotic demolition racing experience. ‘‘Destruction Derby 64" is available at major retail outlets nationwide for a suggested retail price of $49.99.

‘‘A Nintendo 64 installment of this hugely popular franchise is long overdue," stated Michael Rubinelli, vice president of development, THQ. ‘‘Nintendo 64 fans and long-time fans of the ‘Destruction Derby’ series can look forward to features like 2 to 4 multi-player split screen action in all new arena modes like ‘capture the flag’ and ‘bomb-tag."’

‘‘We are delighted to have teamed up with THQ for the launch of ‘Destruction Derby 64,’ a ‘Destruction Derby’ designed exclusively for the

Nintendo 64," stated Paul Neurath, managing director, Looking Glass Studios. ‘‘By building on the huge, multi-car smash-ups and fast action racing with larger and varying race environments, a reward system including numerous production vehicles and unique play modes, we have delivered an all-new demolition racing experience."

Racers will choose from twelve stock cars as they race among a pack of four vehicles against two other packs of vehicles. Competitors actually race through competing packs in this off-beat racing game as the two other packs of racers will be moving in the opposite direction on the course.

Players are rewarded as they advance through the tracks and additional, production-style vehicles become available. With improved graphics, more vehicles, tracks and arenas; and all new play modes, ‘‘Destruction Derby" takes all the explosive action of the original to the next level for racing and N64 enthusiasts alike.

Activision Goes Pro with Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater

Ultra Realistic Skateboard Challenge Lets Gamers Ollie and Grind as Tony Hawk and Nine Top-Ranked Skaters

Continuing to leave the world awestruck with his record-breaking tricks, skateboarding legend Tony Hawk will leave his mark on video gamers when Activision, Inc. ships Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater for the PlayStation game console the week of October 4, 1999.

The ultimate skateboard experience, ‘‘Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater" lets gamers tear up the asphalt with the speed and agility of a seasoned pro. Featuring ten top-ranked skaters, the game challenges players to work their way up the ranks by entering competitions and performing amazing combo moves in an effort to become the highest-ranked skate champ. ‘‘Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater" will be available in more than 15,000 North American retail stores and will carry a suggested retail price of $49.95.

‘‘Skateboarding is one of the fastest-growing sports, boasting more than nine million enthusiasts in the United States alone," states Mitch Lasky, executive vice president, Activision Studios. ‘‘This is the first game that lets both skateboarding fans and novices alike pull off hundreds of tricks and moves in realistic environments top professional skaters."

‘‘Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater" lets gamers perform the radical moves of the most famous skateboarder in the world, Tony Hawk. Additionally, they can try out signature tricks of nine other pros including Bob Burnquist, Kareem Campbell, Rune Glifberg, Buck Laskey, Chad Muska, Andrew Reynolds, Geoff Rowley, Elissa Steamer and Jamie Thomas. Gamers can ride the pros’ decks in more than nine environments that include real world competitions and obstacles. Players can ollie and grind in a variety of realistic skateboard settings, including a skate park, elementary school, downhill course and half pipes, plus urban environments such as a downtown area and a shopping mall. Each environment is littered with secret areas, short cuts, ramps and interactive objects allowing players to ride off of just about everything they see.

The game features hundreds of signature moves, allowing players to skate forwards, backwards and perform combos on the fly including airs, grabs, slides, grinds, kick-flips and landing tricks. An intuitive game interface

and easy learning curve lets players gradually progress to more difficult stunts. The game also features Hawk’s 900 degrees (two and half rotations while airborne) -- a move that had never been accomplished until he recently performed it at the 1999 ESPN Summer X-Games.

Offering several modes of play, ‘‘Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater’s" two-player split-screen trick attack mode give skaters the ability to interact with other players, allowing them to compete on ramps and in skateparks for style points, race between various obstacles on the tracks or play a brutal game of tag. The game also features two additional multiplayer modes, including S-K-A-T-E (skaters’ version of basketball’s H-O-R-S-E) and Graffiti mode in which two players ‘‘tag" different obstacles in an environment by pulling big tricks off of them. If one player has tagged an obstacle, his opponent can steal it back by pulling a bigger trick off the same object. When time runs out, the player with the majority of the environment tagged wins. The game also features a replay mode where players can view the highlights of each run.

‘‘Tony Hawk’s Pro Skater" for the PlayStation game console is being developed for Activision by Neversoft Entertainment.

3DO Releases The Vegas Games 2000 Game For The PlayStation

The 3DO Company Thursday announced the release of the Vegas Games 2000 game for the PlayStation game console.

The sixth game in the successful family games series from 3DO, the Vegas Games 2000 game offers 21 of the hottest casino games, plus realistic sights and sounds that put you right in the midst of all the fun and excitement of Las Vegas.

Players will enjoy five versions of Video Poker, Craps with double odds, single- or multi-deck Blackjack, Baccarat, Roulette, and five Poker games, including 7-Card Stud and Texas Hold ’em. Five versions of Slots and progressive jackpots make it more like playing in Vegas.

A sophisticated approach to reckoning odds makes the Vegas Games 2000 game the perfect practice tool for serious players; you won’t ‘‘learn" the game’s system after playing several times like many other electronic casino games.

Up to four players can lay their money down at Roulette, Blackjack, Craps and Baccarat. Familiar graphics and a simplified interface make it easy for players of all levels to join in the action. Beautifully-rendered playing environments, a terrific sound track, and true-to-life gambling tables and betting machines bring the games to life.

‘‘This is the definitive collection of casino games for the PlayStation game console," said Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company. ‘‘The Vegas Games 2000 game is the perfect game for the family to be able to sit down and enjoy together. The variety the game has to offer and the simple pick-up-and-play intuitiveness make this a fine addition to anyone’s game library."

Other upcoming games from the Company include Army Men -- Sarge’s Heroes, Army Men -- Air Attack, and Crusaders of Might and Magic, for the PlayStation game console, BattleTanx: Global Assault for the Nintendo 64

console, and Army Men: Toys in Space, Crusaders of Might and Magic, Family Game Pack Royale, and High Heat Baseball 2001 for PC.

Nintendo Awarded Airline Video Game Patent

Nintendo of America Inc. last week announced it has been granted U.S. Patent No. 5,959,596 for its innovative airline-based video game and communication system that entertains passengers by allowing them to play video games while traveling to destinations worldwide. This patent demonstrates Nintendo’s commitment to the in-flight entertainment business and creates new opportunities beyond the traditional video game market.

Nintendo has been a pioneer in developing an on-board system that can be integrated into existing airline movie and audio systems. The technology, marketed as the Nintendo Gateway System, has been operational since 1993 and currently is installed in more than 41,000 airline seats. Passengers may access more than 30 premiere Nintendo video game titles, featuring Mario and other classic Nintendo characters. In addition, the Nintendo Gateway System is used in several thousand seats as the graphics display engine for other seat-based airline applications.

"Airlines are always surprised to discover that more than half of video game players worldwide are adults, and it is not uncommon for Nintendo video games to be the preferred alternative to the in-flight movies," says Peter Eck, Director, Network Planning for Nintendo. "Unlike movies, passengers find playing video games is never a repeat experience. Nintendo video games are an established form of entertainment in the home and in the air."

The power of Nintendo and the Nintendo Gateway System as entertainment for airline passengers is demonstrated by the growing roster of world class airline customers, including: Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, All Nippon Airways, Air Canada, Air China, Ansett Australia, China Airlines, and Kuwait Airways, among others.

U.S. Patent No. 5,959,596, entitled "Airline-Based Video Game and Communication System" was issued on September 28, 1999. It complements Nintendo’s other issued patents for its "Hotel-Based Video Game and Communication System." Nintendo has additional pending U.S. and international patent applications for the Nintendo Gateway System.

Current airlines using the Nintendo Gateway System are licensed under the Nintendo patent portfolio. Other airlines interested in using the Nintendo Gateway System or in taking a patent license from Nintendo may contact Peter Eck, director, Network Planning at Nintendo of America Inc., 4820 150th Avenue NE, Redmond, Wash., 98052, or 425-882-2040.

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AtariNews: On The Prowl
10/01/99

We're now into October, and the news is getting better. Battlesphere will be encrypted, GameFan is reviewing two new Jaguar games, and the remakes of the Atari classics are still coming. We have also gotten word that there is a large Atari show in Germany in November. Being an American based newsletter, we have had a hard time finding information on it. If anyone can fill us in on it, it would be greatly appreciated. Please send information to atarian@mediaone.net. Thanks, and have a great October.

THE COUNTDOWN HAS BEGUN

On September 13, 1999, the countdown until the encryption of Battlesphere has begun. 4Play has discovered a way to modify eight Jaguars and EPROM carts. "This bank of Jaguars is constantly booting a self-modifying binary and checking if the Jaguar Boot ROM has failed or passed the software encryption. Once the binary boots, the encryption is successful!" -Thunderbird's Garage. The maximum number of days from the start that this process will take is 125 days, but chances are, it will find the solution in about half that time.

http://home.sprynet.com/~thunderbird/

GAMEFAN ONCE AGAIN REVIEWS JAGUAR GAMES

For the second time after the Jaguar has been out of production, GameFan has reviewed Jaguar games. In the November 1999 issue on pages 112-113 GameFan reviewed/previewed Songbird Productions games Protector and Skyhammer in a very unbiased fashion. The two page article also mentioned the Jaguar developers OMC and 4Play. Pick up the November issue of GameFan to see this article. Carl Forhan encourages anyone who sees this article to send GameFan a thank you note. Maybe if they know this article is welcomed, they will do it more often.

http://www.gamefan.com

NEW INFORMATION ABOUT STELLA GETS A NEW BRAIN VERSION 2

In the last issue of AtariNews, we had an report on version 2.0 of Stella Gets a New Brain, the disc of games for the Starpath Supercharger. CyberPuNKS has informed us of exactly what is on this disc. This disk does, in fact, have every released Supercharger game, as well as one that wasn't released. The only game that is not on this version that was on version 1.0 is Polo due to licensing issues. The Supercharger was designed in the early 80's to load games onto the 2600 from cassettes. Stella Gets a New Brain Version 2.0 is available at the CyberPuNKS homepage for $30 plus shipping

http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/1698/cyberpunks/index.html

JAGUAR GAMES AT SONGBIRD AND PREORDERING OF THE NEW GAMES

Songbird Productions now carries a limited supply of Jaguar games. More games will be added within the next two weeks. Songbird will also periodically have a "Featured Game", where you will have a chance to purchase a great Jaguar game such as Atari Karts, AvP, Defender 2000, or MC3D. Keep watching Songbird Productions home page for information about

the preorder plans for the new Jaguar games: Protector, Skyhammer, Soccer Kid, and Hyper Force. This information should be available soon.

http://songbird.atari.org

THE REVENGE OF THE CLASSICS

Many Atari classics are being remade for today's current systems, most of which are coming to the Game Boy Color. Asteroids and Missile Command have both been recently updated and released to the Game Boy color. Telegames is releasing Towers, an RPG related to the Jaguar game Towers II, also for Game Boy Color. And although it's not quite Atari related, Activision is working on a remake of Space Invaders for the PC, Playstation, Nintendo 64, and Game Boy Color.

THE NUON NEWSLETTER

The founder of AtariNews, Brian Gudzevich, has started a second newsletter, The NUONNEWSletter. If you are interested in VM Labs technology known as NUON TECH, then subscribe to this list to get the latest news and the monthly newsletter. For more information, visit the newsletters home page, NUONICA.

http://members.aol.com/brionhold/nuonica

Send any comments or submissions for "AtariNews: On The Prowl" to:
Brian Gudzevich (Editor) at: Atarian@mediaone.net

Pre-order NEW Jaguar Games From Songbird!

Songbird Productions is excited to announce a pre-order program for the upcoming Jaguar releases, including a special offer for those who pre-order most or all of the new games!

The following games will be published by Songbird Productions in the 1999 and 2000 timeframe:

Title	Date	Price
Skyhammer	12/20/99	$69.95
Soccer Kid	02/07/00	$69.95
Hyper Force	03/20/00	$69.95
Protector	05/08/00	$69.95

Information on all the above games can be found on the Songbird web site at http://songbird.atari.org. Release dates subject to change without prior notice.

*** PRE-ORDER SPECIAL ***

In order to ensure the correct number of cartridges are built, Songbird needs your pre-orders now. You can pre-order a game by sending Songbird Productions a $25 deposit towards each game you would like to purchase. If you desire multiple copies of each upcoming game, you need to pre-order each copy at this time to ensure availability. However, the pre-order specials only apply when ordering 3 or 4 different games, not multiples of the same game.

Pre-order 3 of the above games, and receive a $10 Songbird coupon which may be applied against any one eligible item from the Songbird catalog. Pre-order all 4 games, and receive two $10 Songbird coupons _and_ a free

Jaguar lapel pin. Your pre-orders must be postmarked by October 31, 1999, to qualify for these special offers.

This is a nonrefundable deposit towards the purchase of one or more of the above games. You must complete your order (in other words, pay your remaining balance with shipping, etc.) within 3 months of the publication date of each game.

A pre-order FAQ is included below to answer any questions you may have. The most recent version of this FAQ may be found on http://songbird.atari.org.

*** HOW TO PRE-ORDER ***

Please print out the regular Songbird order form on http://songbird.atari.org, and fill in the required information. Note that there is no tax or shipping on the pre-orders, although there will be as applicable when you complete the order for each game in the future. Mark each game as "PRE-ORDER" on the form, and include $25 per game you wish to pre-order.

In the event you cannot print out the order form, send a typed or neatly printed note to Songbird Productions and clearly indicate which games you are pre-ordering. Mail all correspondance to:

Songbird Productions
1774 10th Ave SE
Rochester, MN 55904
USA

*** PRE-ORDER FAQ ***

Q1. What can I use for payment of my pre-orders?

A1. You must use a check or money order drawn from a USA bank (Western Union, etc.) and in US Dollars. Money orders in US Dollars but drawn from a foreign bank cannot be accepted, sorry.

Q2. I live outside the USA. Is there a way I can order close to home?

A2. Songbird is negotiating with several foreign video game dealers to ensure Songbird products will be available elsewhere, especially Europe. However, Songbird does accept international orders (see Q1 above), and you must pre-order the games to qualify for the special pre-order offer.

Q3. What if I change my mind? Can I get a refund on my pre-order, or apply the money to a different purchase from Songbird?

A3. No. The purpose of the pre-order program is to reward customers by providing them with several benefits including the $10 Songbird coupons, and to allow Songbird to accurately acquire all the parts, printed

material, etc. necessary to release the upcoming games.

Therefore, each customer needs to send exactly $25 per game they wish to pre-order. This is a nonrefundable deposit per game, and cannot be shifted to other Songbird merchandise at a later time.

Q4. What items are eligible for the $10 Songbird coupons if I pre-order 3 or more games?

A4. All items listed in the Songbird catalog and regularly priced $14.95 or above are eligible, except for the following:

Lynx Serial Cable
Crystal Mines II: Buried Treasure
Skyhammer
Soccer Kid
Hyper Force
Protector

Additionally, Songbird 'featured items' advertised in the newsgroup or on the AtariNews mailing list will also be eligible. Featured items are not normally listed in the Songbird catalog.

Only one coupon may be applied per item. Other items may be deemed ineligible without prior notice. Send an email query to songbird@atari.org
if you have questions about a specific product, or check this FAQ at http://songbird.atari.org for the latest information.

Q5. When will I receive my $10 Songbird coupon(s)? How long do I have to use them?

A5. You will receive your coupons with the first game you have pre-ordered. For example, if you pre-order all 4 games, your two $10 Songbird coupons will arrive when Skyhammer ships. The coupons will be valid for at least three months from the time your first pre-ordered game ships.

Q6. Why even bother pre-ordering? Can't I just get the game whenever I want?

A6. Not likely. Pre-ordering a game by October 31, 1999, is the _only_ way to ensure a copy will be reserved for you. Songbird will be producing _very_ close to the pre-order levels. It's therefore imperative that customers pre-order now _every_ upcoming Jaguar game they plan on purchasing.

Here is a summary of pre-order benefits:

* Guarantees your personal copy of each game.
* Game will ship 1-2 weeks before other orders.
* One or two $10 Songbird coupons, if you pre-order 3 or 4 games, respectively.
* A free Jaguar lapel pin if you pre-order all 4 games.

Q7. Can I pay the entire balance for [insert game here] right now?

A7. No. Songbird is trying to estimate accurately the number of cartridges that need to be manufactured for all 4 games. It is important that all games you plan on purchasing are pre-ordered now. You will have an opportunity to pay your remaining balance as announced by Songbird closer to the actual release date of each game.

Your pre-order payment will therefore ensure your copy of the game is produced and reserved just for you.

Q8. Why are all the games priced at $69.95? Isn't that rather high?

A8. Songbird is attempting to bring new products out to a very small niche market. It is imperative that games are priced appropriately to cover the high costs of printing and manufacturing associated with the publication of a new game, particularly if actual sales do not match projected sales.

Finally, the level of compensation received by Songbird will help determine the viability of licensing or developing new products for Atari platforms in the future.

Q9. How can I stay informed on the release dates, payment schedules, new Songbird products, etc.?

A9. Please join the AtariNews mailing list, featuring Songbird updates and the AtariNews: On the Prowl periodic newsletter. Send a blank email to:

atari-subscribe@onelist.com

to join the list.

Also, regularly check the Songbird Productions home page at http://songbird.atari.org for the latest news and version of this FAQ.

Q10. What about [insert question here]?

A10. Please email Songbird Productions at songbird@atari.org with any questions or feedback about upcoming products or the pre-order program. Please be patient, as Songbird is currently experiencing a high volume of traffic due to the upcoming Jaguar and Lynx products.

*** END OF PRE-ORDER FAQ ***

Sincerely,

Carl Forhan

Songbird Productions
http://songbird.atari.org

Preview: Iron Soldier 3

Iron Soldier 3

Old-school publisher Telegames tries its hand with big iron mechs. Mech Warrior look out?

October 1, 1999

Many titles have tried to put you in control of giant robots, but none have been as effective and satisfying to gamers as the Iron Soldier franchise. If youre drooling for some more mech-stomping action, the wait may be over soon. Telegames and Eclipse software are teaming up yet again to bring us another installment in this ongoing series.

For those whove played either game in this series, you know your role -- steer a 40-foot war-machine over anything and everything that gets in your way. But how good can a sequel be without improvements? Yes, you can still bulldoze over tanks, plow through buildings and intercept enemy fire, but now you'll have twice the fun doing it. In addition to the original IS mech, theres a brand new Satyr walker in your arsenal. It's more vulnerable to attack, but much faster than the older IS model. You can also equip your walkers with two new items: a Flame Thrower and Smoke Grenades, increasing the total number of weapons to 15. If that's not enough, your walker will have a jetpack, allowing it to fly for a limited time. In-flight battle adds even more depth to an already action-packed storyboard, comprised of 25 single-player missions.

Though the solo missions look cool, gamers should be more excited about the head-to-head battle mode, a first for the IS franchise. That's right, IS3 will enable two players to duke it out using a split-screen. Like many games in first-person perspective, you'll have the option of splitting the screen horizontally, vertically or diagonally, depending on your mood.

Game controls are advertised to be on par with its predecessors. For non-IS experts, it should only take minutes to get a feel for your walker. For experts, your challenge will be to steer one way and shoot successfully in the opposite direction, while changing your weapon halfway through the turn. Piece of cake.

The graphics in IS3 look impeccable, especially if you like the feel of virtual reality simulators. Enhanced texture mapping, shading and a unique polygon subdivision system (reducing texture distortion) allow for smooth movement within the game. Throw in detailed ground and water layers, rolling terrain, realistic lighting and transparency effects, and you got one of the best looking robo-simulators around... Oh, and I forgot to mention the 18 minutes of rendered full-motion video, complemented by a 60-minute audio soundtrack, all in Surround Sound sfx.

Iron Soldier 3 appears to have everything going for it -- some nice graphics, good sound quality and promising gameplay. And after all, three is the magic number.

Andy Bhatt, IGNPSX

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Apple Unveils iMacs With Desktop Video

Apple Computer Inc. Tuesday unveiled a new line of its colorful iMac computers, with prices starting at less than $1,000 for the first time, as well as a higher-end model that includes desktop video features for making home movies.

''We think this is going to be huge," Apple interim Chief Executive Steve Jobs said as he demonstrated how the new iMac DV could paste together home video clips and add scrolling titles and background music for a professional-looking film.

''We think this is going to be as big as desktop publishing was," he said at a presentation in Cupertino, Calif., near the company's headquarters.

Jobs said Apple, which helped usher in the world of desktop publishing with some of its earliest computers, has built the video-equipped iMacs to enable more people to make films and send them across the Internet the way they currently transfer still images.

As he showed off the iMac's new features, style and slightly refined colors, Jobs made only a passing reference to recent supply concerns, including a shortage of the Motorola chips for Apple's PowerMac G4 computers that is expected curtail fourth-quarter earnings. Jobs also played down the impact of last month's earthquake in Taiwan on the company.

''There have been earthquakes in certain parts of the world that have slowed us down, but we're back on track and shipping again," he said.

Later in an interview, Phil Schiller, Apple's vice president of marketing, said the Taiwanese earthquake would not have a significant effect on the company. Several computer companies including Hewlett-Packard have warned of a production disruption because of the quake, which hit the operations of several component suppliers.

Aside from the added video features and improved performance of the latest iMac, the new machines look essentially like the original iMac, which Apple first introduced 13 months ago. The new machine is about an inch shorter, shaped a bit more like a bubble, with the fruit colored casings refined to be even more translucent than the originals.

The company also unveiled a sixth color, graphite, for those with more subdued tastes. The graphite color will be offered exclusively in the new iMac DV Special Edition, which contains extra storage and memory.

The Special Edition iMac DV is priced at $1,499, while the regular iMac DV

will sell for $1,299 and the iMac without video features at $999, making Apple more competitive in the ongoing PC price wars.

In addition, to appeal to first-time computer buyers, Apple is offering the $999 iMac with a $400 rebate for customers who sign up for America Online Inc’s CompuServe Internet service, which will bring the price for the equipment down to $599.

The iMac has been particularly popular among first-time computer buyers, many of whom purchase computers because they want to get connected to the Internet.

Sun Reiterates Plans To Open Up Solaris

Sun Microsystems Inc. reiterated [last] Friday that it plans to eventually make the source code of its Solaris operating system available to software developers, but its plans are still being defined.

Sun executives have been talking about their plans to possibly include Solaris -- along with several other products that they have opened up to developers -- for many months.

The Wall Street Journal reported Friday that Sun plans to make the source code of Solaris publicly available.

Since earlier this year, Sun has been opening up different products to the development community, in a move that seeks to emulate the recent success of the Linux operating system, a version of UNIX which competes with Solaris in some areas.

Lin1ux, which was developed by Finnish programmer Linus Torvalds, is given away free to developers and users and maintained by a far-flung group of programmers worldwide.

‘‘There is some recognition on Sun’s part that a new software model is developing," said David Harrah, a spokesman for Palo Alto, Calif.-based Sun. ‘‘There are some issues that need to get ironed out."

Solaris is Sun’s proprietary version of the UNIX operating system, a multi-user operating system used to run high performance workstations and servers. Solaris first shipped in 1992 and therefore Sun needs to make agreements with many companies that have intellectual property as part of Solaris.

‘‘It’s a conglomeration of functionality that Sun has been adding through the years," Harrah said. ‘‘A lot of stuff that Sun has has been cross-licensed from other people."

Harrah could not say when Sun will have Solaris code available to the software development community. ‘‘We are trying to do it sooner rather than later," he said.

Sun’s revenue model on Solaris would switch to one more focused on maintenance, service and support of the software, Harrah said.

Currently, Sun is offering the source code to its Java programming language, its Jini technology, and the microprocessor core of its SPARC

processor to developers in a quasi open source model, but developers are required to pay fees to Sun if they use the code in commercial products.

Sun calls its open source program a ‘‘community source license," which is not accepted by the open source community as completely open source. But Sun is hoping that developers will contribute to its product and expand its user base.

The open source community is a group of developers who contribute to Linux, the Apache Web server software and many other open source projects, for free, but now increasingly for pay as many open source companies are starting up after the successful initial public offering of Red Hat Inc.

‘‘Sun has tried this scam before with Java and Jini and we are not going to buy it," said Eric Raymond, president of the Open Source Initiative and one of the leaders of open source community. ‘‘They are trying to use us as free labor, without making us a partner. Sun retains all the rights...These terms are therefore unacceptable."

AMD Ships 700 MHz Athlon Microprocessor

Computer microprocessor maker Advanced Micro Devices Inc. Monday introduced a 700-megahertz processor, the fastest available and the latest in its Athlon line.

The new processor’s speed outstrips the most recent 600 MHz Pentium III, produced by its archrival Intel Corp. Intel has plans to introduce faster processors.

Compaq Computer Corp. and International Business Machines Corp. will make systems based on the Athlon processor, AMD said in a release.

The move is part of AMD’s strategy of shifting its focus on providing processors to the more profitable higher end of the personal computer market, rather than the low end.

The new 700 MHz processor is priced at $849 each in 1,000-unit quantities.

Intel Names Merced Chip ’Itanium’

Computer chip giant Intel Corp. said that it has selected ‘‘Itanium" as the brand name for the first product in its next generation of microprocessors, previously code-named Merced.

Intel’s Itanium chip is expected to be in volume production by mid-2000. In late August, Intel announced a major milestone in the development of the new architecture -- it achieved first silicon of the chip, meaning that it had manufactured the first actual chips based on the design.

Itanium is the company’s first chip to use its new IA-64 architecture, which will process data in chunks of 64 bits, rather than the 32-bits that chips like the Pentium III process today. Intel has been working with Hewlett-Packard Co. since 1994 on developing the new architecture.

‘‘When we went through the naming process, the intent was to come up with a name that would connote the strength of the IA-64 technology," said Jami Dover, vice president of Intel’s worldwide sales and marketing group. She said Intel also wanted to have a suffix that would connect with its Pentium brand.

The Itanium will be targeted at the high performance workstation and server market and will not initially be marketed as a desktop processor. Dover said that when people hear the name Itanium, they will likely associate it with the metallic element titanium, which is a strong, low-density, corrosive-resistant element.

‘‘We wanted to make it clear that this is a very high end computing platform, designed for very robust computing," Dover said.

Intel plans to reveal more technical details about the chip and how it works at the Microprocessor Forum Tuesday in San Jose, Calif., a technical conference for systems designers and semiconductor engineers.

3Com Rolls Out Palm VII Nationwide, Cuts Price

3Com Corp.’s Palm Computing unit Monday said it was rolling out its Palm VII handheld electronic organizer with Internet access nationwide and it cut the price by $100.

The nationwide rollout follows limited availability since May in the New York metropolitan area. Analysts have said that consumers may have been put off by the Palm VII’s high price -- which has now been reduced to $499 -- and the limited availability of the wireless service.

The Palm handheld organizer is the No. 1 device in the field. 3Com has sold more than five million. It is 3Com’s fastest growing business, although Santa Clara, Calif.-based 3Com recently announced its intention to spin off the Palm unit as a separate company.

The Palm VII uses a wireless connection coupled with its Palm.Net service to let users trade stocks, access special Web sites designed for the small-screened devices and also send and receive short e-mails.

Online retailer Amazon.com Inc., online auctioneer eBay Inc. and FMR Corp.’s Fidelity Investments have also partnered with Palm Computing to let consumers check their bids on auctions and trade stocks. Palm said material from 23 Internet content providers is available through wireless access to the Palm.

Palm also said it was introducing new versions of its Palm V and Palm III organizers. The Palm V, with an estimated price of $449, has more memory. The Palm IIIe, has an estimated price of $179 and a clear case and is targeted at students and entry-level users.

IBM Regains Record For Hard-Disk Storage Space

International Business Machines Corp. has managed to cram a record amount of data on a computer hard disk, potentially tripling the amount of

available storage space, the computer maker said Monday.

Using a new metallic alloy for the material on which the data is stored, IBM said it was able to squeeze 35.3 billion data bits (gigabits) per square inch onto the hard drive, a 75 percent increase over the 20 billion bits the company achieved less than five months ago.

At 35-gigabit density, every square inch of disk space could hold 4.375 gigabytes, as much as two full-length feature movies, 77 hours of music or over 2 million sheets of double-spaced typewritten paper.

The new data storage technique overtakes recent records set by Seagate Technology Inc. and Toshiba Corp., which have played leap-frog in this area for several years.

IBM said the outer limits of data storage density have doubled annually in the past two years. This marks an acceleration over prior years, when it increased at a little over half that rate and provoked concern that exponential gains in data storage capacity might soon reach physical limits.

To date, however, the advance has been demonstrated only in research conditions.

‘‘If this trend continues, 35-gigabit-density products would be available within a few years," IBM said in a statement.

America Online Launches Version 5.0

America Online Inc. introduced its latest software Tuesday, eyeing a future where wireless phones and hand-held organizers are as popular as computers for reaching the Internet.

The AOL 5.0 software will let users adapt such features as a new interactive calendar to portable devices, which are starting to hit the market for Net use.

Steve Case, chairman and chief executive officer of AOL, said he wants to move away from tying AOL to any one device such as the computer.

‘‘You stop thinking about AOL as a screen-based, PC-based, telephone-based service and start thinking of it as a set of capabilities imbedded throughout your life," he said in an interview.

Case envisioned a world in which subscribers can access e-mail and other features ‘‘no matter where you are, no matter what you are doing, no matter what device is near you."

In addition to phones, pagers and organizers, AOL plans to offer its service through the television set. If subscribers spend more time online, then the company could boost rates for online ads and get commissions from shopping sites.

Not all of the features will be available for some devices initially, AOL said. Services will be rolled out in the next several months and years as those devices become more widespread.

Zia Daniell Wigder, an analyst with the Internet research firm Jupiter Communications, cited portable devices as a largely untapped market in which the first suppliers have the advantage.

‘‘Everyone’s scrambling to figure out how users will interact in these devices," she said. ‘‘It’s becoming hypercompetitive."

Earlier this week, online retail giant Amazon.com announced that it will sell its products through new wireless devices, including the Palm VII hand-held device that 3Com Corp. released nationwide this week.

Case said the success of laptop computers points to a high demand for mobility. And as new devices become more popular, AOL wants to serve their users.

AOL’s calendar feature allows users to transfer data such as appointments or birthdays from computers to hand-held organizers. Users can then exchange the information with other portable devices.

Computer-based calendars are often impractical because users must be at a computer to find out where they need to be. AOL hopes to get around that by adapting its system for portable devices.

The new software offers more comprehensive searching and access to recently deleted e-mail. AOL will also begin to let users check their e-mail by telephone - with an electronic voice ‘‘reading" each message.

AOL is also launching nationwide a digital photo service it runs with Eastman Kodak Co.

The ‘‘You’ve Got Pictures" service, tested in a few cities this past summer, allows users to send electronic copies of pictures to AOL accounts. From those accounts, consumers can arrange photos in online albums, send them as e-mail to friends and family, or order reprints and enlargements.

AOL 5.0 will also recognize how computers connect to AOL so that those using higher-speed connections could get more video clips and other items that do not work as well at regular speeds. Such broadband access is only beginning to enter the home market.

AOL is the world’s largest Internet service provider, with more than 18 million subscribers.

Features of America Online 5.0

Features available with AOL 5.0:

-Calendar: Interactive calendar to keep track of appointments, key dates and other events.

-You’ve Got Picture: Service that lets photofinishers send electronic copies of pictures to AOL accounts.

-AOL Search: Feature that permits searches of the Internet and AOL’s exclusive content together.

-E-mail and Web enhancements: Access to recently deleted e-mail messages

and improved ways to transfer e-mail address books and files of favorite Web sites between computers.

-Screen names: Each account offers seven different usernames, instead of the previous five. Names can also be longer.

-Broadband: Recognition of high-speed connection, taking users to video clips, games and other items that are more data intensive.

Delphi Forums and KOZ.com Announce Alliance to Offer Premier Web-Based Hosted Community Solution

Delphi to Provide Popular ichat Products to More Than 19 Million Users

Delphi Forums and KOZ.com, two of the most successful community creation services companies, Wednesday announced an alliance through which Delphi will integrate KOZ.com’s ichat as a key component of Delphi’s community platform. Both ichat Pager (instant messaging) and ichat Rooms (real-time chat) will be available to Delphi’s extensive network of partners, which has a combined user base of more than 19 million.

‘‘The companies that use the Delphi platform to create community on their Web sites will now have even more choice and control when we integrate the new ichat products," said Dan Bruns, chairman and CEO of Delphi Forums. ‘‘We are excited to partner with KOZ.com, a highly respected name in the community market, to meet increased demand for value-rich community services and tools."

‘‘Delphi and KOZ.com share a commitment to delivering top-quality community creation products and services to companies and Web sites of all kinds," said John Ayers, general manger of ichat for KOZ.com. ‘‘Delphi’s extensive reach will help us to expand the distribution of ichat to a wider user base via the Web. With Delphi hosting ichat on its popular community platform, companies can now get our chat and instant messaging products up and running quickly and cost-efficiently."

The alliance between Delphi and KOZ.com enables each company to benefit from the other’s complementary service offerings. KOZ.com is the leader in extending real-world communities onto the Internet and offers media companies value-added products, services and support that simplify Web-based community-building. Delphi offers a full suite of community creation services including an advanced ‘‘control center," enabling partners to offer forums on their Web sites, seamlessly integrate registration, and select from a wide variety of promotion, collaboration, and revenue-generating options.

Customers interested in using ichat Pager and ichat Rooms can choose either a hosted, service bureau option available through Delphi Forums or a licensed software version directly from KOZ.com. ichat on Delphi will be available beginning in the fourth quarter of 1999. For more information about product and service availability, contact Delphi at 617.441.4545 or rusty@delphi.com or KOZ.com at 919.767.2159 or ichatsales@koz.com.

Bell Atlantic, 3Com To Sell High-Speed Internet

Bell Atlantic Corp. and top modem maker 3Com Corp. introduced Wednesday a high-speed Internet access package to be sold in retail stores in major East Coast markets.

The service, dubbed Infospeed, is part of a race by Bell Atlantic and other major U.S. local phone companies to be the first to introduce wide-scale, high-speed Internet access across the United States, pitting them against cable television operators offering a competing service.

The package will allow customers of Bell Atlantic, the nation’s largest local telephone company, to buy equipment and services to set-up high-speed Web links without having a phone technician visit their home.

The company said the package represents the first time high-speed modems will be available in retail stores in the 13-state Bell Atlantic service region, which stretches from Maine to Virginia.

The Infospeed packages will be available initially in 60 CompUSA Inc. and Staples Inc. retail stores by the end of October, D’Alessio said. Bell Atlantic declined to say how long it would take to offer high-speed Web access throughout its service region outside metropolitan areas.

The service uses Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) technology which delivers data over standard phone lines at speeds ranging from 640,000 up to 7 million bits a second, or many times faster than current standard modem running at up to 56,000 bits, known as ‘‘56k".

The Personal Infospeed modem package will retail for $229, plus Bell Atlantic Internet service for $49.95 a month, which allows speeds up to 640,000 bits. The higher-end modem is $189.95 a month allows speeds up to 7.1 million bps.

Consumers are eligible for a $130 rebate after using Bell Atlantic’s service for two months.

‘‘3Com’s modem’s allow consumers to get online faster and easier than ever before, which is the first step in maximizing the benefits of (high speed) Internet access service," said Fred D’Alessio, Bell Atlantic’s group president for consumer services.

For phone lines that are DSL compatible, the package requires no rewiring and no home service call from Bell Atlantic. Service can be activated within seven days from a Bell Atlantic facility once customers place their orders online.

The connection allows voice communications without disconnecting the modem, an improvement over current dial-up modems which tie up lines for incoming calls while in use.

Bell Atlantic is initially targeting metropolitan areas in Washington, New York, Boston, Baltimore and Pittsburgh and metropolitan areas of New Jersey, a spokeswoman said. The company hopes to expand high speed capabilities to other metropolitan areas in the future, but the spokeswoman offered no specific timetable.

She declined to comment on any timetable for high speed access outside of metropolitan areas.

Bell Atlantic expects 30 percent, or 700, of its 2,300 central offices to be equipped for DSL by the end of the year. By the end of March 2000, 43 percent, or 1,000, of its central offices will be DSL compatible, D'Alessio said.

By the end of the year, at least one central office in every one of the 13 states serviced by Bell Atlantic will be equipped for high-speed service, Grady said.

The phone company must upgrade many of its existing lines neighborhood by neighborhood in order to offer such high-speed services and is concentrating on its most densely populated markets at first.

Separately, Bell Atlantic and America Online Inc., the No. 1 Internet services company, are working in partnership to offer the same high-speed services to customer of AOL residing in the Bell Atlantic region.

Ready For Instant Voice Messaging?

A Phoenix-based startup has officially flipped the switch on its bid to take instant messaging from a text-only medium into a speech-driven environment.

At Internet World in New York this week, visitalk.com will introduce new IP-based services for real-time voice, video and data transmissions. The free service, which is available now from visitalk's Web site, enables subscribers to leave voice mail or talk with other individual members or groups in real time via the Internet.

Key to the service is visitalk.com's LDAP 3-compliant directory, which serves as an Internet white pages. Each subscriber receives a PCN (permanent communications number), a 12-digit ID that enables users to conduct point-to-point phone calls and send or retrieve voice mail. With H.323-compliant client software such as Microsoft Corp.'s NetMeeting or White Pine Software's CU-SeeMe, subscribers also can conduct videoconferences.

The service lets users store as many as 10 voice mails. A premium version supports unlimited voice mails, along with instant messaging -- through which users can communicate via voice or text - and realChat options for one-on-one or group discussions. After a 60-day free trial, the premium services will be priced at less than $5 a month.

"This is a real monumental leap forward in data conferencing," said company president Michael O'Donnell. "It's truly rich communication."

visitalk.com has been beta testing the services since June, adding about 8,000 testers during that time, said O'Donnell, who claims scalability won't be a problem. The service, he said, can support more than a half-million concurrent users.

Initially, visitalk.com will target its service at consumers; the company plans to add business-to-business services in the first quarter of next year, O'Donnell said.

Visitalk.com, founded in September 1998, has secured about $22 million in venture capital funding. The company can be reached at www.visitalk.com.

Microsoft Working On Internet Version Of Office

Microsoft Corp. is working aggressively to develop an Internet-based version of its market-dominating Office software but has not yet decided how to price it, a company executive said.

Lisa Gurry, an Office product manager, Thursday denied a published report that the software giant would make an announcement at next week's Internet World convention in New York about plans to offer the new version on a rental basis as well as for sale, possibly by the first quarter of 2000.

''We're looking at a couple of options, including working with partners or making it available direct from Microsoft," she said. ''We're not discussing any pricing models or any pricing specifics yet."

The plan for a Web-based version of Office reflects an Internet-driven industry shift away from sales of shrink-wrapped software or even annual licenses and toward ''application services" offered over a network.

Microsoft executives, under pressure to articulate a coherent Web strategy, have embraced the services model, which allows customers to buy only the software they need and to outsource much of the costly installation and maintenance.

''We need to build the platform that lets software move to the services model," Microsoft President Steve Ballmer said last week.

Microsoft has become increasingly vocal about plans for an Internet-based version of Office since rival Sun Microsystems Inc. announced in August plans to give away similar software for free.

A Sun executive said 500,000 users have already downloaded free copies of StarOffice, and he said a free Web-based version would be widely available in the spring through Internet service providers.

Brad Chase, a Microsoft vice president for Internet operations, said last week the Redmond, Wash.-based company planned to offer an online version of Office over its new bCentral business Web portal, but not for free.

''It will happen probably sooner than you would expect, not in the far distant future," he said, declining to be more specific.

Industry analysts are divided on how fast a transition to Web-hosted applications will occur, with some expecting more than half of all software to be run off a network within three years. Others expect the method to be used more for specialized back-office applications like accounting and lightweight applications like electronic mail and calendaring.

''I still think the primary method is going to be delivery by PC for corporate and home office users," said consultant Scott Winkler of Scott Winkler Associates.

Microsoft has in the past fended off aggressive challenges from low-priced rival products to maintain the dominance of Office, its biggest source of revenue after Windows with an estimated $5.5 billion in sales last year.

‘‘Just because you change distribution channels doesn’t mean Microsoft necessarily loses its dominant position," said Scott McAdams, president of Seattle-based brokerage McAdams Wright Ragen.

But Microsoft executives clearly are grappling with how to price a Web-based version of Office without endangering a critical source of revenue.

‘‘The hard part is to figure out what they’re going to charge for it," said Rob Enderle of Giga Information Group. "That’s a very political process and fraught with all kinds of difficulties."

Microsoft executives have said they will work with Internet service providers and other third parties to offer the Web-hosted version of Office.

One possible provider is Web hosting giant Verio Inc., but a Verio spokesman said the company had no agreement with Microsoft to provide Office on a rental basis.

He said Verio does plan to offer Web-based extensions of Office 2000 beginning early next year that will allow its customers to take advantage of new features, such as one-click publishing of Word documents onto the Internet.

Virus Protectors Get A Brand New Bag

Anti-virus software is quickly going the way of the browser -- soon to be free and ubiquitous, said industry insiders Friday at the Virus Bulletin99 conference.

Soon, every user will get free detection software, with security firms selling updates via the Internet at a monthly fee. Anti-virus services will also be sold to Internet Service Providers for resale to users.

"In the future it won’t be about protecting computers against viruses, but content security," said Larry Bridwell, program technology manager for security firm International Computer Security Association.

With the number of threats against computers increasing -- viruses, hackers, privacy-invading companies, and good old fashioned bugs, to name a few -- keeping content safe and the computer running is now Job No.1.

Consumers’ desire for a single fix-it package is changing the economics of the industry, admitted Carey Nachenberg, chief scientist for the Symantec Anti-virus Research Center.

"We’re all afraid the retail channel will dry up," he said.

An even more important factor: Viruses infecting computers via e-mail move far too quickly for companies to rely on manual updates to their software.

Last spring, for example, the Melissa virus infected hundreds of thousands of computers within 48 hours. "We’re at a turning point right now," said Nachenberg in a keynote speech Thursday. "We need to re-examine our anti-virus software, and companies need to re-examine their anti-virus strategies."

Symantec is taking a two-pronged approach to the problem. With partner IBM Corp., the anti-virus software maker is nearing completion of its "Digital Immune System." The technology automatically updates all subscribers over the Internet with virus recognition patterns whenever one of those computers encounters a new virus.

Fixes for a new virus can be disseminated to all the machines on the network within as little as 30 minutes of encountering the first virus. The speed of the Internet, which viruses use to spread quickly, can now be used to get the cure out just as fast.

"As we distribute information faster and more broadly, we have to be careful," said Steve White, senior manager of IBM's Massively Distributed Systems Research Division, who helped design the new Digital Immune System service. "It becomes much easier to get viruses over the Internet."

Symantec is also preparing to package its anti-virus software into a single integrated security suite that will give home users a firewall, Internet filtering software and anti-virus utilities, said Symantec engineers at the show. The product will be released later this month.

But even that stand-alone product will eventually be connected to the Digital Immune System service, providing virus updates extremely quickly.

"The whole industry is going toward automatic fixes and automatic updates," said IBM's White. "The anti-virus vendors are just adopting it faster."

Symantec's rivals are working on similar strategies. "A lot of the basis of value of a standalone product in the home is going away," said Crag Kensek, director of product marketing for anti-virus firm Trend Micro Inc. "For the non-technical home user, it's like insurance."

Trend announced in September its new eDoctor strategy, which allows ISPs to protect their customers from viruses by scanning each file downloaded from the Internet. US West and Sprint have signed on to the service.

Rival security software firm Network Associates Inc. plans to release a similar technology to Symantec's called the AutoImmune System, early next year, said its engineers.

While finding and fixing viruses faster has peaked the interest of corporate network administrators, an automated system's ability to collect data on the number of virus incidents is equally valuable, said one administrator at the conference, who asked to remain anonymous.

Currently, the best source of such data is the Wildlist, and even that volunteer site would like to see better and more accurate statistics, said Sarah Gordon, one of the directors of the independently maintained Wildlist.

"It would be extremely useful to get reports from these systems," she said. "We intent to pursue that in the future."

Self-Destructing E-mail Developed

Thinking of sending a harassing e-mail message? Getting involved in an

interoffice affair? How about an arms-for-hostages deal?

Here’s a product for you: e-mail that becomes impossible to read after as little as a few seconds or minutes, using a self-destruct feature set by the sender.

A startup high-tech firm, Disappearing Inc., has developed a way to put time-bombs in e-mail messages, ensuring that they are readable only as long as the sender wants them to be.

‘‘It’s a cool idea," said Kerry Stackpole, head of the Electronic Messaging Association, a trade group.

E-mail, designed to be a fleeting, spur-of-the-moment way of communicating, has turned up as evidence in lawsuits - witness Bill Gates’ threats against Microsoft’s rivals - and even congressional investigations into Monicagate and the Iran-Contra affair. Virtually every workplace has its own horror stories of e-mail reaching the wrong people.

‘‘This would stop them cold," Stackpole said.

The system, which should be available early next year, encrypts each message with an electronic key, also held by the receiver. The sender can decide how long the key will work - anywhere from a few seconds to years. After that, the key self-destructs and the message becomes unreadable.

The system works within a company’s existing e-mail system. Messages flow through existing servers and companies can continue to use their current e-mail systems.

Disappearing Inc. is a privately held company that was formed in February.

Congressman Says Break Up Microsoft If Guilty

Tom Campbell, a U.S. congressman and expert in antitrust law, said Tuesday that if Microsoft Corp. is found liable in its landmark antitrust case it should be broken into pieces.

Campbell, a Republican from California’s Silicon Valley and a professor at Stanford Law School who sometimes teaches antitrust, said that he was not prejudging the outcome of the Microsoft case. But Campbell said he had thought about what should happen if the judge did find broad liability.

‘‘The only remedy that makes sense is structural," Campbell said in an interview. ‘‘That is, to separate the operating system from the software development."

Campbell said he would also be open to hearing arguments on breaking up the company into two or three identical pieces, although he was less certain that would be workable.

The Justice Department and 19 states have alleged that Microsoft holds and has abused monopoly power in the market for its Windows operating system that runs personal computers.

The government alleges that Microsoft has used its monopoly power to cling to its monopoly and to expand it to other areas of business. Microsoft

argues that it is not a monopoly.

The Justice Department reached an agreement with Microsoft in 1995 that was supposed to solve supposed abuses. But in 1997 the government went to court and charged that Microsoft had violated the agreement.

Campbell said, ‘‘Any conduct remedy can be easily evaded." One way to make a conduct remedy work is to apply close oversight, but Campbell said that was a bad alternative.

‘‘I don’t want a federal court or, heaven forbid, an Internet Commerce Commission" overseeing Microsoft, Campbell said.

Campbell said that no one can know the extent of Microsoft’s liability, if any, until District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson issues his ‘‘findings of fact," which may come as soon as this month.

If Jackson determines that Microsoft’s business practices are broad violations of the antitrust law, then Campbell said it would be appropriate to hold a remedies hearing to explore what should be done.

Two analysts held similar views in interviews last month. They said it would be preferable to break up Microsoft, rather than regulate it.

‘‘Significant regulation makes investors get real nervous real quick," said Erik Olbeter, a senior Internet analyst for the Schwab Capital Markets and Trading Group in Washington.

Steve Shepich of Olde Discount agreed and said that heavy regulation ‘‘would be bad for the industry."

Olbeter said that, in contrast, markets would be ‘‘able to figure out very quickly the value of a divestiture."

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